

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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SAM-01 /059 W

----- 100691

R 061513Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9885

INFO AMCONSULATE ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY

SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA'S ANTI-EGYPTIAN PROPAGANDA

REF: DAMASCUS 669

1. WHILE LANGUAGE OF EGYPTIAN ANTI-BA'ATH PRESS ARTICLES CONTINUES TO BE HARSH AND IN SOME CASES VIOLENT, WE ARE NONETHELESS STRUCK BY THE EVEN HARSHER LANGUAGE OF RECENT SYRIAN COMMENTARIES. FURTHER, SOME SYRIAN ALLEGATIONS ARE MANIFESTLY UNTRUE.

2. EMBASSY DAMASCUS PRESS ROUND UP FOR FEBRUARY 5 (DAMASCUS 593) PROVIDES GOOD EXAMPLES.

A. ALLEGED DISTURBANCES IN EGYPT. WE ARE NOT AWARE OF A SINGLE ANTI-SADAT DEMONSTRATION IN EGYPT IN RECENT WEEKS. AS WE HAVE REPORTED, THERE HAVE BEEN SMALL STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH, ALTHOUGH NO DOUBT INSPIRED IN PART BY COST OF LIVING PROBLEMS, HAVE BEEN ORGANIZED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT UNIVERSITY

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CONDITIONS. INCIDENT AT MANZALA (CAIRO 1270) WE HAVE CONFIRMED WAS

NASTY CONFRONTATION BETWEEN POLICE AND FAMILY CLAN CAUSED BY DETENTION OF ONE OF FAMILY MEMBERS ON CRIMINAL CHARGES. IT WAS NOT, AS DAMASCUS RADIO CLAIMED, "FIERCE CLASH" GENERATED BY "MARTYDOM" OF CITIZENS TORTURED BY "BARBARIC" GOE.

B. GOE COMMITTEE FO "REWRITE" HISTORY OF REVOLUTION. ALTHOUGH DAMASCUS IS REPORTING RECENT "ESTABLISHMENT" IN INQUIRY COMMITTEE "TO BRING TO TRIAL JULY 23 REVOLUTION REPRESENTED BY NASSER," COMMITTEE IN QUESTION WAS FOUNDED OCTOBER 10, 1975, AND HAS MET SEVERAL TIMES. WHILE CHAIRMAN MUBARAK IS NO DOUBT UNDER INSTRUCTIONS TO WRITE HISTORY OF REVOLUTION IN WAY WHICH WILL MAKE SADAT LOOK GOOD, COMMITTEE IS NEITHER NEW NOR HAS IT BEEN CHARTERED TO "BRING NASSER TO TRIAL."

C. VISITORS AT NASSER'S TOMB. THERE WAS SMALL GROUP AT NASSER'S TOMB ON HIS BIRTHDAY JANUARY 15. WE HAVE BEEN NO LARGE NUMBERS OF PEOPLE THERE AT ANY TIME SINCE LAST JULY 23.

D. HAMAMSI ALLEGATIONS AGAINST NASSER. FAR FROM BEING "HYENA," HAMAMSI IS PERHAPS MOST HIGHLY RESPECTED OF ALL EGYPTIAN JOURNALISTS FOR INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM. WHILE THE BARBARIC TREATMENT HE RECEIVED UNDER NASSER HAS NO DOUBT LEFT ITS MARK, HAMAMSI IS REPUTABLE JOURNALIST AND NEEDS NO ENCOURAGEMENT TO WRITE WHAT HE BELIEVES.

2. COMMENT: DAMASCUS PRESS ALLEGATIONS TO THE CONTRARY, SADAT REMAINS A POPULAR PRESIDENT. IT IS IRONIC THAT GRUMBLING ABOUT COST OF LIVING PROBLEMS IS ESCALATING, BUT SADAT SEEMS TO ESCAPE POPULAR BLAME. IT OCCURS TO US THAT WILD AND ERRONEOUS ALLEGATIONS BY DAMASCUS RADIO, NEVER VERY POPULAR HERE ANYWAY, ARE NOW PROBABLY COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE, SINCE EGYPTIAN LISTENERS WILL BE UNABLE TO SPOT ANY OF THE MASS DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST SADAT WHICH DAMASCUS CLAIMS ARE TAKING PLACE IN EGYPTIAN CITIES, VILLAGES AND UNIVERSITIES. EILTS

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